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ABSTRACT

The 1976 Rural New York Conference focused on unresolved social problems in rural America, with particular attention to needs of rural women in New York. Growing out of a course on rural poverty and social change at Syracuse University, the conference was initiated and planned primarily by students. Proceedings include "Commentaries" by: (1) the director of the New York State Migrant Center on migrants and education, transportation needs, education, day care, and human services; (2) a rural planner on local planning, rural human resources, and consumer cooperatives; (3) a public administration graduate student on human services planning; and (4) a social work graduate student on illiteracy. A "Discussants" section touches on topics such as migrant education, Indian education, rural schools, family planning, health services, sex education, social isolation, transportation, and parent education. There are summaries of workshops on: migrants and farm workers; youth, family planning, and health services; education and illiteracy; and minorities and housing. A "Conclusions" section offers specific issues pertinent to state and federal policy formation under headings of revitalization of rural areas, health care, transportation, housing, human services, research, and rural humanism. The publication also includes a list of resource persons for the conference. (RS)

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Rural New York

The Plight of Rural Women in Upstate New York

Conference Proceedings

April 2, 1976

Hortence S. Cochrane

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Rural New York

Conference Proceedings

The Plight of Rural Women in Upstate New York

Hortence S. Cochrane

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Geneseo, New york

State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Syracuse, New York

Syracuse University

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Acknowledgements

Special thanks are due many participants in this Conference, because their endeavors and contributions heightened an awareness of the problems in rural New York. With the wholehearted support and encouraging response of The Honorable Lieutenant Governor Mary Anne Krupsak, this Conference became a pacesetter in Rural Human Services in New York on April 2, 1976. And to Nancy Dubner, Director, Western New York office of the Lieutenant Governor, gratitude is gratefully accorded. She facilitated the student research on rural concerns, initiated the interne research experiences, and promoted continuous collaboration with the Lieutenant Governor's office throughout this endeavor.

Tribute is paid to *all* students of the unstructured learning course "Rural Poverty and Social Change," for their production of position papers, their untiring collaborative efforts, time-consuming data-gathering endeavors, critical evaluation of findings, and participation in the Conference and workshops.

The assistance of Dr. Neal Katz of Syracuse University Non-Violence Studies; Dr. Gloria Mattera and her associates of the New York State Migrant Center, Geneseo, New York; Dr. George Armstrong of New York State College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse; Benjamin Bortin of the United Farm Workers' Support Program; and many community resource persons is sincerely appreciated.

This Conference would not have been possible without the cooperation of Reuben Bitensky, Associate Dean of the School of Social Work and the staff, especially Tina Archambeau, Assistant to the Dean; Mary Lester, Supervisor of Central Services; Charlotte Stanard, Secretary; and Angie Roffo, Receptionist who responded "beyond the call of duty."

The gracious touch of Ida Benderson, Director, Syracuse Jewish Community Center added a special flavor to the occasion, and we are indebted to Marion Cole, of the American Red Cross, for her astute and thorough scrutiny in the preparation of the *Proceedings.* Thanks also to Vivian Hutchins for her untiring editorial assistance.

To the United Press, Syracuse City and Rural Press, the *Daily Orange* of Syracuse University, the local television and radio stations, the New York State Bureau of Migrant Education and New York State Migrant Center, a very special *Thank You* for mass media coverage, displays, and resource materials.
H.S.C.

Preface

"The Plight of Rural Women in Upstate New York," the theme for the *Conference* "Rural New York," was an outgrowth of the course *Rural Poverty and Social Change* offered at Syracuse University, Spring Semester 1976. The course encompassed a trend toward unstructured "open learning" as opposed to a "closed teaching system." The essential goals of the course were geared to facilitate (1) growth of the student and, (2) learning how to learn experientially.

Related to an "open learning system" or student-centered learning were the following basic assumptions:

1. that social work students as responsible learners have a favorable disposition to participative education;
2. that learning occurs when the responsibility lies with students to plan learning experiences and to engage in experimental education when the subject for study is meaningful to them;
3. that learning is most effective when students are involved in real problem-solving tasks that require the development of new knowledge rather than being the passive receptacles of existing information;
4. that exploration, critical inquiry, and discovery of new solutions are to be encouraged in the learning process; and
5. that learning is a continuous process requiring self-evaluation, peer feedback, and a readiness to test and share ideas, insights, and experiences in diverse learning arenas.

Social work participants formed an Ad Hoc Committee to clarify guidelines and to define tasks for a study of rural women. There were weekly meetings where topics and resources for study purposes were discussed. Basic questions of "where are we going?" or defining learning objectives, "how do we get there?" or learning experiences, and "what do we do with what we find?" or evaluation, were reviewed. They identified general areas of knowledge crucial to a study of rural problems and the four following components emerged:

1. Populations of concern;
2. Extent of rural problems;
3. Resources to meet needs; and
4. Modes of intervention.

The students became cognizant of the paucity of data on rural conditions in New York. Their cursory examination of "invisible" rural populations touched on cultural perceptions of landless farming groups and on the political and economic policies which were obstacles in meeting the social needs of rural communities. It was evident to the students that lack of information hampered the data-gathering process.

It seemed expedient to relate student experiences to a social research internship experiment under the auspices of the Lieutenant Governor's Office of the State of New York. In this way, state departments would serve as sources of information and facilitate searching out state inputs and services to diverse rural populations. Under the guidance of Nancy Dubner, students were encouraged to meet and pool their findings in brief report form. There was a consensus that their endeavors were producing significant information, and it was proposed that their final reports be presented to The Honorable Lieutenant Governor Mary Anne Krupsak at the end of the semester.

However, the students wanted an opportunity to share their ideas and experiences in an open forum to alert community groups to "invisible rural women." A conference idea was initiated, and the preliminary planning was assumed by the Ad Hoc Social Work Committee for the Plenary Session. It was agreed that the Lieutenant Governor be invited to give an introduction to rural concerns in New York at the Conference.

Non-social work students, who had confined their interests to the quality of rural life, focused upon workshop sessions, indicating that this would be a new experience for them. Four workshops were designed to follow the Plenary Session and concentrated on rural populations such as (1) migrants and landless farm workers; (2) youth, health and family planning; (3) education and illiteracy; and (4) minorities and housing.

Preparation for the conference gave students an opportunity to work jointly with various social institutions, to explore and define student roles in planning, decision-making and negotiations, and to be the actors delivering their own scripts as position papers and handouts on rural concerns. Speakers and resource persons were selected and introduced by the students.

Over 300 persons attended the conference, including students, faculty, lay persons, and representatives from urban and rural organizations. Student reporters summarized workshops and attested to the fact that the sessions, including the luncheon and Coke breaks, afforded opportunities to establish personal contracts, to exchange views, and to fact-find about the needs and resources for rural groups in New York State.

Subsequent to the conference, the social work students were invited by the Lieutenant Governor to the State Capitol, Albany, New York to share their findings with those State Legislators interested in rural problems and with state department officials of human services in New York.

Hortence S. Cochrane
Professor/Social Work
Syracuse University

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Plenary Session

Welcome

Dr. Reuben Bitensky
Associate Dean
School of Social Work
Syracuse University

Lieutenant Governor Krupsak, commentators, discussants, students, and guests, I want to welcome you wholeheartedly to this conference. The theme, "The Plight of Rural Women in New York State," evokes a vision of women covering rural New York State with "gusto activity"; but in view of the capacities of our female participants, this is something from which we all will benefit.

As far as the School of Social Work is concerned, we are particularly glad that the role of rural New York is being considered today. Since the War on Poverty, there has been a let-down nationally, and a feeling that not much could be done about major social problems confronting American communities. On the other hand, there is a resurgence of interest in rural America, in deprived groups, particularly ethnic groups, women, and the elderly. In a sense, there is a real concern about the problems of rural populations.

As long as there are committed students in this School of Social Work and interested faculty who are politically motivated and devoted to correcting social injustices and social deprivations, there is hope.

Again, welcome to this most timely Conference.

Opening Remarks

The Honorable Lieutenant Governor Mary Anne Krupsak
New York State

Customarily, in conferences such as this one, public officials are called upon to participate by delivering a speech or an address. However, this will not be the case at this conference. Instead, my presence here is one of the aspects of outreach that my office is attempting to develop with private resources in our State. And, it involves primarily listening, not talking. It grows out of my own concept of leadership which takes its lead from the people.

The expert resource with which we join in this instance is the Syracuse University School of Social Work and the students of "Rural Poverty and Social Change," under the direction of Professor Hortence S. Cochrane, to whom I give my special thanks. For too long, the talents that exist in the faculties and students of our higher educational centers in New York State have been ignored. Instead, their work, research and deliberations should be directly available and, indeed, acted upon by those in decision-making positions. It is incredible that this relationship has not yet been widely developed.

My Western New York Office in Rochester, under the direction of Nancy Dubner, has been trying to create this and similar relations in order to increase the in-depth knowledge of my office in how the various regions of our state view themselves, what the problems really are, and whether New York State government is, in fact, a help or a hindrance. This format is just one of those that we have used to try and accomplish our state goals. In other places, we have spent two or three days in meetings, conversation, dialogues, and inspection of facilities, all aimed at trying to help us make the right choices and to set the priorities within very serious, troublesome economic constraints.

In this administration, we are deeply concerned about all parts of our economy. I, myself, come to this conference with a determination that the issues of the rural and small community life shall be addressed! Governor Hugh Carey of New York shares this concern, and we both are serious about trying to focus upon (1) rural economic development as well as upon urban economic development; (2) upon rural human services as well as urban human services; and (3) upon rural life styles as well as urban life styles.

In this Conference on Rural New York, we seek first-hand information relative to the problems of our rural populations. Too often New York is perceived as a strictly urban state; yet we have the third largest rural population in the nation, numbering some 3 million people. Accordingly, the

focus of the research by the social work students has been in the area of special rural needs, such as health services, education, housing, migrant and farm workers, and transportation. Through their research presentation and their relationship with our office, we hope to have created a new liaison for analysis and problem-solving which will move their research forward into *action.*

Thus, this conference is not an end in itself; for once the final research documents are available to me, I will see that the students have a forum in which to present the results of their work to the appropriate departments of New York State government. That is really the essence of our hope for a successful conference today, and I have never seen greater interest and enthusiasm than that of these social work students and faculty sponsors.

Again, I am grateful for their hard work and continued participation. When government and the people from various sectors of any community come together in this fashion to sit down and address issues openly, it means that, at last, government becomes relevant to the lives of human beings.

Commentaries

Dr. Gloria Mattera
Director
New York State Migrant Center
Geneseo, New York

Lieutenant Governor Krupsak has made two significant statements in terms of the relationship between the state government and the rural areas. First, her office is utilizing the expertise existing in institutions such as the educational network of universities. This is an outstanding activity on the part of New York State government. It is hoped that other states will view New York State as an example of its endeavors on behalf of rural communities!

There are excellent resources in institutions of higher learning and agencies within a state, including educational, business, industry, and local community networks, which can provide pertinent information to state governments. New York State is doing this — that is, taking the findings, suggestions, and conclusions of student social researchers and planning to implement them. This is significant because social researchers are not in a position to implement their findings. If a state government does not recognize the implications of research findings, then who will? Secondly, resource persons are available in Governor Hugh Carey's office.

We, who work with migrant and farm populations, have some knowledge about what goes on in labor camps and in rural farm areas. We can identify the problems and, to some extent, the dimensions of these problems. On the other hand, solutions to these problems are another matter of concern.

Solutions to problems necessitate not only that rural people have the "clout" to make changes, but also that designated officials responsibly representing the state government visit rural areas and perceive existing conditions first-hand; then become actively involved in helping rural communities come to grips with their problems.

In the migrant situation, there are violations that disturb and distress many rural groups. However, they are powerless, truly helpless, to do anything. Landless farm hands and migrant workers can seldom testify or obtain redress of their grievances. If the state government could only send designated, committed officials to rural areas to validate problems discerned by the informers or social researchers, coupled with a mandate to report *directly* to the executive branch of the state government, a major step would be taken to deal with the problems of rural communities.

Interestingly, the rural scene is the original setting for the "equal right" to work for women. Rural women had "equal rights to work" long before urban females. The "plight" of rural women highlights how they have had to dig the soil, plant seeds, haul manure, harvest crops, and carry out farm chores jointly with male farm workers in addition to child rearing and household management.

But, what hampers rural women today is *transportation.* They cannot get from place to place in rural areas easily. Services for small children are also a real concern for rural mothers. If there are no day-care services, rural women must remain at home to care for the children. Likewise, their homes are understaffed. There are too few hands to perform the many day-to-day chores related to survival in a rural setting.

In migrant camping areas, day-care services, educational classes for adults, weekend and evening programs are designed to improve the quality of migrant life and break the monotony. On the other hand, nonmigrant rural people are complaining and asking why similar programs are not provided for them. Such educational and social activities would meet their needs and counteract their boredom and isolation. In some instances they not only resent but also openly oppose programs for migrants, whom they regard as "drifters and transients."

There are some family day-care services in rural areas, but there is a crucial need for trained personnel to work in rural day-care programs. Social welfare workers make every effort to examine this problem; but they, too, emphasize the need for more training of day-care mothers. Job opportunities are limited for rural people generally, and the problem of retraining them looms large as an obstacle to employment in rural communities.

As to the comforts of living, rural families still "crack ice on the bucket" for drinking water in the middle of winter. In the evenings, they still go to nearby streams to obtain water in order to have it available in the mornings. And, this is in Upstate New York communities! Moreover, on the back roads, flush indoor toilets just do not exist; and noninsulated homes and outhouses in many rural communities are common!

Thus, it is timely to take a look at rural New York and see what can be done to make it a place where human beings would like to live. More and more, urban people are moving to rural areas. Whether or not they will bring with them some of the benefits of urban conveniences, will depend largely upon what New York State government will do to enhance the quality of rural life.

Conservativeness, rigidity, and fixed views still impede when new and different services are introduced. There must be innovative ways to educate rural people and to make services available to those who need them in rural areas. Planned Parenthood organizations do operate in rural areas, but

they are not serving the secondary school population. In contacts with in-service training programs in rural schools, the agenda will often include planned parenthood information. Invariably, the rural school personnel becomes apprehensive and will eliminate planned parenthood topics from training session agenda, stating that rural parents cannot accept such discussions. Yet many rural high school girls are pregnant and could have benefitted from information on birth control as a preventive device.

The Bureau of Cooperative Education in New York State is exemplary and offers an educational network of services to the rural community. But, the most outstanding program at present in rural New York is in the area of migrant education. A significant educational network exists wherein every migrant child receives an hour of tutorial assistance each day in a rural school. In general, rural children do not receive this service in the regular rural public school.

There is a critical need to look at how individualized instruction is provided for the entire rural school-age population. The Wick Program has been instituted and does improve the nutrition of mothers and infants in the rural communities. Moreover, Cooperative Extension staff members visit homes to help rural mothers prepare nutritious meals and plan purchases economically with the use of food stamps.

A nucleus of strength does exist in rural families where self-sufficiency is evident among the people generally. But, to sustain the integrity of rural groups and improve their situations, the impetus must come from New York State. The Lieutenant Governor has confirmed her interest today and, certainly, this conference opens up the seriousness of the plight of rural populations in New York State.

Margaret Spurlin
Rural Planner
St. Lawrence County Planning Board
Potsdam, New York

Within the past 15 years, New York State has been moving toward regional planning and too frequently at the expense of local planning, which often is detrimental to small rural communities. The regional approach does make sense when metropolitan and urban vested interests are priority considerations, but not for rural areas far away from metropolitan centers.

The process of working directly with a local community is lost in regional planning. An identification with rural problems and the formulation of realistic goals for a rural community is most difficult to achieve. People have to come together to figure out what the needs really are and to cipher out how to meet them. Problems and needs have to be factored out on a local basis; and regional planning agencies cannot forecast or assess needs unless participatory democracy is practiced in a local setting.

The use of paraprofessionals as providers of services has utilitarian value in rural areas. In small communities, educational and training potentials are unknown, and thus, untapped. On the other hand, the training of rural residents to deliver services in their own communities provides a built-in resource which insures a level of service to the rural community.

Rural populations have many attributes which set them apart from urban groups. Land is a real asset which can be used to promote productive pursuits that benefit farming populations. Those who live close to the soil often have acquired a crystalized kind of intelligence based upon concrete experiences related to the land, and, in the process, develop basic skills.

Farming women have skills and know-how that urban women bypass. Rural women learn to be patient and to use what is available. They know how to work and gain satisfaction from productive involvements. Generally, rural people are inventive and creative; and they know how to improvise and devise things on the spur-of-the-moment or for special occasions. Moreover, they involve the whole family and even the total community in their projects. Their emergency services, volunteer fire staffing, festivals, and county fairs indicate how they can plan, be resourceful, cooperate with others, and handle catastrophies — especially fires, storms, and floods.

But, in a rapidly changing society they do require new means to benefit more advantageously from the land. Consumer cooperative enterprises seem a "natural" for the rural areas and are gaining in popularity. The idea of wholesale, retail, and producers' cooperatives and tools, owned in common, does have merit in rural areas. This idea has been demonstrated all the way from a shared garden rototiller up to capital-expensive dairy equipment. Shared tools could be extended to forestry, harvesting, and cutting wood for heating and building purposes, including cooperative production of dwellings for humans and livestock and agricultural harvests.

Cooperative enterprises could have profound effect upon rural employment and, perhaps, revitalize an interest in rural regions. In the process, rural communities would not collapse for a lack of productive outlets; but facilitate a restoration of local pride, self-esteem and self-respect which would contribute to the quality of rural life throughout New York State.

Mary Lou Bagdovitz
Graduate Student
School of Public Administrtion, Maxwell School

In making an inventory of human services in New York State for the aged, one discovers that there are too few resources for rural persons. Re-

searchers would benefit from a clearinghouse of information on human services, and New York State should establish a clearinghouse of information on rural matters and issues and computerize such data. Too frequently, student researchers are put in the position of being detectives and snoopers who have to be persistent in obtaining information on rural populations.

The consensus of opinion of human services planning officials is that the government must provide more services for the elderly in rural areas, especially in health and housing. There is an agreement that urban solutions to the problems of aging populations have to be revamped for a rural population where despair and alienation run rampant.

Inadequate transportation continues to be an important factor. In rural communities, there is no means of travel other than a once- or twice-a-day bus service which few elderly persons can use. Regular daily transportation is more in keeping with the needs of the elderly. Moreover, social life for the elderly is restricted because they must walk or be beholden to someone to drive them to social events.

Maintaining the elderly in their own homes in rural communities is related to the availability of services. Many of the elderly want to keep their homes and maintain their independence, but it becomes more difficult for the elderly to do this as fewer services are provided for them.

Many elderly persons were reared in rural areas at a time when local doctors made home visits and the communities were not places of violence. Health planners are considering economical solutions to health care, at least preventive health care, to the rural elderly in their own homes rather than transporting them to metropolitan health centers. However, few health care aides operate in rural communities, which can hamper health services.

Residential rehabilitation in rural areas, such as insulation, heating, and utility improvements, is rapidly becoming a viable solution to the housing problems of New York. However, public funds are required to make such services an actuality, and, in the rural areas, few beginnings have been made in this direction.

New York State can no longer ignore the crucial concerns of the rural elderly where de-institution of state residents is a common practice. Rural communities have always depended upon state hospitals, state training schools, and state penal institutions because local and county resources are limited. The return of rural residents to their local communities brings out distinctly the scarcity of resources in rural communities for adult groups and, in particular, the elderly.

Nancy Gardner
Graduate Student
School of Social Work

Illiteracy and poverty walk hand in hand in rural areas. Illiteracy is found in agricultural areas; and the incidence of illiteracy is higher in rural areas. The nation's highest illiteracy rates are in Southern rural areas.

There are 10 million people in rural areas nationwide whose income falls below the poverty line; and, they are one-third of the nation's poor. Their rate of functional illiteracy is nearly 60 percent, and one out of every four persons in rural areas is poor, and 70 percent of the rural poor exist on less than $2,000 a year.

Using less than five years of formal schooling as an indicator for functional illiteracy, 5.3 percent of the total New York State population and 2.5 percent of the rural farm-nonfarm population were illiterate in 1970. The statewide rate of functional illiteracy for whites was 4.9 percent; for Blacks, 7.5 percent; and for persons of Puerto Rican birth or parentage, 20.4 percent.

In rural areas, there is a much greater disparity in rates of illiteracy between white and nonwhite persons than in urban areas. For rural farm areas, white illiteracy was 2.2 percent, black illiteracy is 15.2 percent, and Puerto Rican illiteracy, 17.7 percent. Within rural areas there is a significant disparity in illiteracy between white and nonwhite populations. The per-capita income of nonwhite rural residents is signficantly lower than the income of white rural residents. For the rural nonwhite population of New York State, illiteracy and poverty contribute to subsistence rather than survival living.

In New York State's total population, 60 percent of the persons who have never attended school were females. In both farm and nonfarm areas there are fewer women than men who have had eight years of formal education. The disparity between rural male and female education increased as they moved toward the 8th grade, with the completion of elementary education by the male, increasing at a much greater rate proportionately than by females. However, an interesting fact is observable in statistics on high school completion. In both rural farm and nonfarm areas there are more women completing four years of high school and graduating than men. The implications are that for more rural women than men, there are social factors which cause them to drop out of school before the 8th grade. Lower rates of educational attainment for rural women do not indicate a lack of desire to be educated. On the contrary, circumstances which preclude women from the goal of education are also the roots of their illiteracy.

Family responsibilities, reinforced by cultural and religious traditions, are primary reasons why rural women leave school. As a rural female approaches adolescence, she experiences pressures to care for other children at home, as well as to work either within or outside the home to increase the family income. The more limited the family's economic resources, the more likely that the daughters will drop out of school.

If a married woman learns of literacy training, taking advantage of that opportunity will depend upon child care services, transportation to an educational center, and support from her family to pursue her goals. Illiteracy studies have indicated that spouses often forbid their wives to take advantage of educational training for fear there will be changes in the family.

If literacy has not been the rural woman's experience, it will not be the experience of her children. A dearth of literacy skills limits a rural woman's opportunity to obtain information in modern methods which would increase the economic productivity of her family and community. Productivity in agriculture and industry has a relationship to the mother of the family; and, if literate, the mother is able to introduce into the family's life style new experiences and ways of thinking and behaving.

Discussants

According to Pennye Nash, a study conducted by the United States Office of Education found that 54 percent of Americans, 17 years of age and older, cannot read written materials without great difficulty. The study took items from grocery stores based on a readability formula devised by Dr. Edgar Dale of Ohio State University. A word was considered difficult if a fourth-grade student could not understand it.

The results of this study brought out the following points:

(1) reading a driver's manual required a sixth-grade level of understanding;
(2) following directions for cooking or medical purposes necessitated a seventh- to tenth-grade level;
(3) filling out a lease form for an apartment, a college-level understanding; and
(4) applying for food stamps, at least a twelfth-grade level.

This study emphasized the fact that people have to have formal educational preparation in order to function adequately in a literate society.

Migrant education attempts to prepare farm workers to be literate in coping with their environment. The basic premise is that migrant individuals *must* know how to *read* in order to function in society as literate people. As federal funds for migrant education increased, New York State Education Department established the Bureau of Migrant Education. By 1968 the New York State Center for Migrant Studies was created at Geneseo, New York, in order to improve the education and welfare of migrant children and their families.

When migrant children are old enough, they are placed in the fields to work to add to their families' earnings. In 1970 a teen-age, in-camp program was initiated to help working youth earn and learn. Usually, a team of teachers go to migrant labor camps three evenings weekly during the migrant season to work with youth and their families. Parental involvement is an important aspect in this program.

Parents are engaged in all phases of the Geneseo migrant programs. They serve on the Advisory Board of the Center, The Child Development Center, The Children's Demonstration School, and the Center's Vocational and Educational Departments. These programs have an impact upon migrant children's educational problems so seriously aggravated by seasonal transfers from school district to school district and from state to state.

"Benign neglect" is characteristic of rural areas nationally. However, migrant farm workers are receiving attention educationally because of

federal and state funding inputs. Generally, education for literate citizen participation requires closer scrutiny for all farming and rural groups who could benefit from programs similar to those provided by the New York State Migrant Center.

Sister Mary Steves reiterated the idea of "benign neglect", relating it to the indigenous American Indians. The problems of Indian education cannot be isolated from such social problems as health, housing, economics, employment, the social climate of the Indian community, and the consequences of discrimination and prejudice against them. In 1975 the Indian Self-Determination Education Assistance Act was passed. The purpose of this Act was to restore to American Indians the right to conduct their own educational programs. According to the 1975 statistics, educational programs were available to American Indians, but only 1.5 percent of them were administered by the Indians themselves.

In Onondaga County there are three distinct Indian populations. First, the American Indians who live on the Onondaga Reservation in Nedrow and attend the Reservation School; second, those Indians who reside on or near the Reservation, but attend schools in the LaFayette School District; and third, the Indians who are residents of the City of Syracuse and send their children to the Syracuse District Schools. The first two groups are rural, and the third, although living in an urban community, has much in common with the rural groups because they are seasonal migrants occupationally.

The fact that rural women have roots in "women's rights" was mentioned by Dr. Mattera. For over 50 years American Indian women have participated in Indian government on the Reservation and have considerable authority and power. They are respected members of tribal councils and play a vital role in the Indian community. Yet, American women's organizations nationally have not asked the Indian women to share their experiences, and have overlooked the resources and qualities of the Indian women.

Indian women have always shown a "vested interest in ecology." Today, there *is* discussion about land conservation and "the quality of life" emphasizing a closeness with nature. The American Indians have always conserved the resources and beauty of nature, and much can be learned from them about man's relation to nature as an Indian idea of "ecology!"

American Indian women are concerned about education for their children, the minority status they face in American society, what is happening to Indian youth, and the textbook perceptions of Indian life styles and their customs. They are aware of the structural changes taking place in their life and the challenge to them to prepare their children more adequately to participate in a changing world.

Bonnie Klimcsak emphasized "benign neglect" of education for rural youth, and brought out that rural residents do not have access to programs such as those provided for migrants. Small schools and small school districts characterize rural areas. Therefore, centralization and consolidation of schools and districts would provide advantageous use of resources for rural communities.

In the farming areas, low salaries tend to attract teachers with limited preparation and experiences. Instructional materials are frequently inadequate and outdated, and the individualization of students, who range from low to high abilities, is not always possible. The gifted, the slow learner, the handicapped, and those with learning disabilities are not reached early. Therefore, rural schools require the services of specialists who, as consultants, could assist in case-finding and preventive intervention.

Virginia Lloyd highlighted facts pertaining to family planning, indicating that of the women in need of family planning services, 45 percent live in non-metropolitan counties. In 1972 there were 415,000 low-income women in Upstate New York's 57 counties who were in need of subsidized family planning services. This was 18 percent of all women 15-44 years of age. In 1971 in Onondaga County, 57.4 percent of the low- to marginal-income women did not have access to family planning.

About 75 percent of all hospitals in Upstate New York do not provide family services, including 41 hospitals, each with more than 1,000 deliveries annually. The major source of medical care is the physician, who, if available, usually does not have current information concerning birth-control methods. Nor is he up to date on approaches to family planning.

An agency providing medical services for the rural woman is the County Health Department, with clinics open on a scheduled day of the month in designated areas. Thus, if a woman misses her area clinic, she must travel to another area or wait until next month. Lack of services includes the shortage of medical personnel, many of whom are unwilling to work in rural areas where acceptance of "outsiders" is slow.

Generally, the limit that a woman can be expected to travel for services is 20 miles. However, rural women travel as far as 200 miles to obtain family planning services. In the rural areas there is dependency on the automobile to get to clinic services during scheduled hours. However, a 1970 consensus indicated that 14 percent of all occupied housing units in Upstate New York were without cars. Geography, climate, and road conditions are other factors with which to contend. The woman who drives may have to overcome her husband's objections, because he usually controls the use of the family car as job transportation.

The most disadvantaged group of rural women are the female adolescents. The County Health Departments do not serve females with birth control needs under 16 years of age. In some counties this age limit is 18 years. Of the 415,000 low-income females in Upstate New York necessitating services, 94,000 of them were between 15 and 19 years of age from marginal income families.

Few statistics exist in the area of family planning on rural females. There are none in the area of sterilization of rural women. It is crucial that low-income rural females have the same choice as to family planning as urban females. More programs for rural adolescent girls should be developed, and legislation be passed permitting adolescents the right to have access to birth control and family planning information.

Lois Smith addressed her discussion to "parenting" and the effect upon the rural family. She pointed out that rural parents must compete with the mass media, automobiles, youth peer pressures, and the social facets of a rapidly changing society. Farm parents have to prepare their children for an industrial world thrust upon them by technological advancement and agribusiness.

Many farm families express the hope that their children will migrate to urban centers where more opportunities exist. Conversely, many young rural people, disillusioned by social inequities and middle-class values in metropolitan communities, have returned to the land. Some are living in communes with life styles not accepted by conservative rural communities, although many of these young adults, who are parents, could augment a rural community's resources.

Today, poverty plagues many rural New York families. Although rural poverty shares the cruelties of urban poverty, it is "invisible," harder to cope with, and difficult to document. Poverty affects "parenting" devices. There is evidence that child-rearing practices of poor families are not conducive to the emotional well-being or educational achievements of their children. New York Upstate winters are an added hardship for rural families attempting to survive in difficult circumstances. Migrant rural families are hampered not only by marginal incomes, but also by a transient existence, poor housing, ill health, inadequate parental supervision of the children, and limited education.

Social isolation is a problem for many rural families, particularly the women, and especially the home-bound mothers. Even the mothers with "wheels" complain of feeling isolated, and the lack of transportation perpetuates social isolation. There are many rural families immobilized except for the school bus or a sometimes-operating used work truck. The part isolation plays in spouse abuse or alcoholism in rural areas is not known but is worthy of study.

Human services in rural areas are either lacking or some distance away. This complicates family life when services are needed and are essential to a family's well-being. Both time and money multiplies with distance to services; and rural parents have difficulty in fitting family needs to family resources or available human services to human endurance when coping with isolation from the mainstream of society.

In rural communities, parents are prepared poorly for parental roles and responsibilities; and many are faced with conditions beyond their capabilities. Even the most competent parents are confronted with the complications of modern times and require some assistance with "parenting" problems which is difficult to obtain in a rural community.

Rural parents have to adjust to a new concept of parent-child relations. They have responsibility for their offspring but have only partial authority over them. The fragmentation of family functions, ambiguity of parental roles, and conflicting norms between the generations overwhelm many parents. Urie Bronfenbrener deals with the increasing isolation of the generations in his writings. Children interact less with parents today than in previous generations and spend more time with peers. Less parental attention and greater peer influence have some bearing upon youth self-esteem and nonconforming behaviors, and contributes to feelings of alienation.

Rural parents have few resources available for guidance in coping with the problems of living. Day Care services for rural working parents, comprehensive programs for teenage parents, Rural Family Development Programs in conjunction with Head Start operations, Outreach Planned Parenthood services, rural parents trained as home visitors and home helpers, and the Rural Transportation Feeder Systems providing transportation to existing bus lines are innovative programs serving some rural areas in New York State. Interestingly, these programs emphasize *prevention* rather than remedial approaches, include parental involvement and parent education, and merit community support and continuation.

Jennifer Tompkins reported her findings on rural health care, indicating that crucial health problems exist in rural America. A 1971 survey of health care highlighted the fact that for rural communities, the infant mortality rate was 23 percent higher than the national average and that the general death rates were 22 percent higher. There was a dearth of health professionals in rural areas; and bad roads restricted access to medical services. Rural populations suffered because of the quality of their drinking water. Unfluoridated water contributed to their poor dental health, and contaminated water, because of improper sanitation and lack of solid-waste disposal, accentuated the problems of water for human use.

Agriculture remains the chief occupation in New York rural communities, and farming produces hazardous jobs. The high rates of respiratory difficulties among farmers dispel the "fresh air" myths associated with rural life! In addition, rural roads in New York State are a source of crippling accidents for farm laborers.

According to statistics, migrant farm workers, primarily Blacks, Spanish-speaking, and Native Americans have a life expectancy of 49 years, or 23 years less than that of the average white laborer. In general, low-income, landless farm workers and poor rural populations have nutritional deficiencies and substandard housing, and 60 percent of substandard housing is found in rural areas nationally.

Rural residents, including farm workers, have more chronic health conditions than their urban counterparts. There is evidence to support the fact that the vigorous physical demands of rural occupations take their toll upon the health of rural workers who age long before their time. They live with survival stresses reflected in hypertension, cerebrovascular diseases, ulcers, emphysema, arthritis, and rheumatism. Small children, ages 12-36 months, from poor and marginal income farming families are known not to thrive, grow, or develop, and they display symptoms of anemia, malnutrition, clay poisoning, and rheumatic fever.

Medicaid benefits invaribly go to one-parent recipients and, frequently, rural populations represent two-family marginal income groups. Moreover, Medicare programs for the elderly, survivors, and disabled persons set lower reimbursement rates for the medical professionals practicing in rural communities. The limited cultural outlets and recreational opportunities, in addition to employment options, contribute to a high prevalence of emotional responses such as apathy, alienation, social isolation, alcoholism, child abuse, and teenage pregnancies among rural groups.

Despite the obstacles to the well-being of rural groups, there are rural health delivery systems and consumer health projects. Rural communities interested in upgrading health care, sometimes finance the medical education of health personnel under a contract to return to a rural community. Use of revenue-sharing and federal funds has eased the apparent helplessness of rural citizens who recognize the value of family planning, maternal and child-care programs, day care, and early screening for primary preventive and case-finding purposes. Health projects under the auspices of medical schools, collaboratively with nursing and human service departments, offer expertise not only in the delivery of direct services, but also in the management of medical care services, the reimbursement potentials, and the state law requirements as to health care, when deinstitutionalization of state hospital residents are involved.

Some medical schools have experimented in rural health care and recognized the relatedness to nonmedical factors. Their experiences have indicated innovative models for rural health care as follows:

1. comprehensive health centers which include outreach services to rural residents;
2. recruitment of health personnel, e.g., nurses and human service workers from small communities who have ties with rural communities; and
3. group medical practice, both profit making and nonprofit, make rural areas more attractive to medical professionals. These operations make use of administrators and other health practitioners including human service personnel.

It has not been uncommon for rural areas to resort to the services of the veterinarian for "human doctoring." The training of health aids near their rural home base could offer a reliable source as providers of a wide range of health services.

Sheila Newport reiterated the serious plight of "young single motherhood" in rural New York. Young unwed mothers are prone to drop-out of school even though they want more education. Too frequently they face unemployment, poverty, welfare dependency, or additional pregnancies in their teens.

A study by Frank Furstenberg, Jr., a sociologist of the University of Pennsylvania, indicated that most teenage pregnancies are unwanted and could have been prevented if sex information had been available in the local vicinity. Rural adolescent mothers state that they wanted to complete secondary school and obtain a high school diploma, but school districts have no continuing educational program for pregnant girls. Moreover, rural communities still reflect prudish attitudes about sexual education in the public schools.

The economic and social tragedies relating to pregnant teenagers reinforce the fact that family planning information programs are rarely available in rural farm communities. Due to the social attitudes and the diverse population distribution, the delivery of services to rural residents must be tailored to fit the rural community's needs.

Workshop Summaries

I. Migrants and Farm Workers

Reporters: Gretchen Krantz, Melissa Traub, Robert Ward

Workshop-i focused upon the struggle of landless farm laborers to obtain work contracts, guaranteed wages, and protection against dangerous pesticides. Decent housing, adequate nutrition, low-cost health care, and fresh drinking water in the fields were crucial concerns. Constant pressures had to be exerted upon farm owners to have clinics, emergency medical services, day-care facilities, credit unions and bans on child farm labor established.

The key strategy employed to arouse an awareness of the dehumanization of farm laborers was the consumer boycott of farm products. The right of farm laborers to vote still remains an issue. California permitted approximately 400 state "supervised" farm workers' elections to take place in 1973, a landmark event, because strenuous lobbying had occurred to stop election funding where farm laborers were denied the franchise. Cesar Chavez, who adheres to a nonviolence philosophy, has lead the fight on behalf of western farming groups. It is anticipated that in the immediate future he will concentrate his attention on the plight of farm workers in the East.

Sweatshop in the Sun by Ron Taylor was offered as information on the exploitation of migrants. Materials and visual aids on legislation, housing, and labor conditions were presented by resource persons from the New York State Migrant Center. Discussions indicated the isolation of migrant camps from the mainstream of the community and the barren existence which affected the social development of migrant children. Cross-cultural experiences for children and youth have been introduced in order to expose them to different life styles and occupations.

Marginal income, boredom, and alcoholism constituted major problems. Social dependency was characteristic of the migrants and was encouraged by crew leaders. Camp supplies and purchasing commissaries were operated by them, and migrants were compelled to buy commodities from the crew leaders — who extended credit, yet seldom gave receipts when bills were paid. The minimum wage for a farmhand is $2.00 hourly, but much of farm labor is based upon piecework. Many workers are not paid the minimum wage rate, often do not work a full day, and job security remains very low.

To institute changes, it was suggested that farm workers be unionized; and it was recommended that:

1. Direct contracts should be made between employers and farm workers and thereby abolish crew leaders. Although some honest crew leaders exist, many withhold farmhand wages and overcharge for food and supplies; these conditions add to the dilemma of farm workers.

2. A state official attuned to the social reality of migrant camps, should be authorized to visit, observe, and document findings without reference to names, areas, or circumstances which would lead to the identity of a farm laborer. Contract farmhands do not complain for fear of losing their jobs, of incurring physical abuse, or of creating conditions injurious to their families.

3. Concerned people, as advocates for farm workers, should be supported by public officials, encouraged to spot and report violations, and, in cooperation with the State Police, initiate charges against farm owners. The legal approach is an effective way to change conditions in labor camps and thereby educate farm workers as to their inalienable rights.

II. Youth, Family Planning, and Health Services

Reporters: Mary Himmelstein, Laura Saunders, Ann Scheier, Marilyn Weitz

The discussion brought out the fact that the quality of life is deteriorating in rural areas. Seasonal unemployment is prevalent, and access to human services is restricted. The 1974 Census revealed that over one-third of American adolescents between 14 and 17 years of age resided in nonmetropolitan areas. This was approximately 5.5 million young persons. Rural youth are socially and physically isolated from the mainstream of American life. They are unskilled and undertrained and live in rural communities where a paucity of jobs exists.

A report of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Unit disclosed that crimes and juvenile delinquency have been increasing at a faster rate in nonmetropolitan areas than in urban centers, e.g., 21 percent in 1975 in rural areas, while the urban rate of increase was 18 percent.

Guns, appliances, and farm equipment as well as crops, fertilizers, and farm supplies were frequently pilfered. "Rustling" of livestock was common, with trucks used to haul cattle from farmyards. Crime detection is difficult in farm areas where residents live great distances from their neighbors, and outbuildings are often located off roads away from farmhouses, obstructing the detection of intruders.

Violent and nonviolent acts are prevalent, with human and substance abuse on the increase. Peer group pressures influence substance abuse among rural school age populations and relate to the social needs of rural youth. The exodus of rural young people to metropolitan centers necessitates

further exploration, and ways must be found to enable youth to achieve in their rural communities. Migration of rural youth is creating havoc for metropolitan centers, which are wholly unprepared for the influx.

Paradoxically, people in the big cities would like to move to small towns and rural areas — a desire reflected in the trend away from big-city living. Nationally, according to Gallup Surveys, nine out of ten persons in cities would prefer to live in a village, town, or rural area. Many people express a preference for less-populated areas, especially the elderly and families with small children.

Deviancy in rural areas is frequently overlooked, denied, or handled solely by the local law enforcement officials or the sheriff according to Leroy Schultz of West Virginia School of Social Work. To some extent, rural conditions generate nonconforming social behavior. Few human services exist for the rural youth in trouble, and resources for intervention are nonexistent. Moreover, few options are possible for young females who escape boredom by marriage or a job away from home. Some are labeled "good girls" and others stigmatized as "bad girls" who experience sexual exploitation and end up in the county courts.

A dearth of counseling services in health and family planning prevails. Recent figures in Onondaga County indicated that more than 600 young females, ages 19 years or younger, had had abortions, and 20 of these were 14 years old or younger. New York State at large had a 29 percent increase in pregnancies in the 10-16-year-old group within the last five years, and 4 percent of all 16-year-old girls in the state had been pregnant in 1975. Most critical is the lack of professional workers who can deliver family planning services to rural communities.

Funding is essential for high-quality services; family planning agencies today have to spend $80 per client annually for services. On the other hand, providers of services must be special kinds of persons who are sensitive to the plight and characteristics of rural residents, who are able to plan how to involve residents in improving their lot, and who can function in a variety of roles.

III. Education and Illiteracy

Reporters: Maryann Elhindi, Sabrina Grossman, David Mugforel, Karen Rusinski

Illiteracy is defined as an inability to read or write. For farm and rural groups, illiteracy is associated with an inability to be educated. Among migrants, illiteracy stems from two sources, namely, the rural environment and the transient nature of their existence. Rural adults among the county penal population generally have a fifth-grade reading level, and lack motivation or have low expectations for themselves which contributed to their functional illiteracy.

Today, the quality of education offered rural youth is superior to what it was a generation ago. Nevertheless, educational achievement among rural students, in particular minority students, is lower than among urban youth. Rural students drop out of school sooner than urban students, and the percentage of rural high school graduates who attend institutions of higher learning is lower than urban secondary school graduates.

Educational attainment among rural American Indians continues to be the lowest in the nation. Five school years is the average for them, and the dropout rate is twice the national average; the achievement level of Indian children is from two to three years below that of whites, and Indian children fall farther behind the longer they stay in school. Too few Indian secondary students succeed in reaching college level, and the attrition rate among Indian college students exceeds that for non-Indians.

Hispanic groups, especially Mexican Americans, will work on farms but prefer to live in small towns. The adults average less than four years of school, and their children usually have severe language and cultural limitations. Hispanic children who conform to school expectations tend to succeed in school, while those who do not are likely to fail. The attitude of Hispanic groups is positive toward schools, but parents claim that the schools have made little attempt to communicate with or help them learn and support their efforts in rural settings. Teachers need assistance to become aware of their own attitudes and perceptions of rural children, in particular those with minority, ethnic, and farming backgrounds.

IV. Minorities and Housing

Reporters: Bridge Banister, George Gilbert, Ron Nenni

The plight of minorities in rural areas relates to the process of discrimination which accents differentials in social competency. Discrimination is in opposition to the American ideal of equality, but rural minorities are pressing for change, for "equity" — equal treatment and distribution of the available resources, especially housing, education, and transportation.

Inadequate intellectual development and limited educational opportunities are revealed as minority groups participate in rural communities. Because minorities are "visible," they become targets for the hostility of community residents who cannot tolerate differences. They are slow to recognize that those who manifest discrimination are *low* on the social prestige and occupational scales.

Resistance to acceptance in the schools, housing, jobs, and life of the community is related to the rural residents' uneasiness about their economic and job situations, the insecurity of their social position, and the concomitant conflict about survival needs. Rural needs are widespread, and discrimination in small communities is heightened by inadequacies, limitations, and deficiencies of both resources and services.

Shelter or housing is not only a necessity in Upstate New York, but also carries a status symbol to protect against any intruder. Rural areas contain less than one-fourth of the nation's population, but have nearly 60 percent of the nation's substandard housing. Rural areas receive less than one-fifth of all available funds for housing improvement.

Limited financial means and "invisible" poverty tend to be long-standing, generational, and supportive of the fact that "poor people have poor relatives." However, poor rural families may live within a stone's throw of middle-income families. The exception to this may be in areas where segregation of the minority already exists.

Migrant housing usually consists of wooden shacks set apart from the farming communities, and living conditions are not accorded much attention. Rural zoning codes and residents' objections frequently forbid trailer and mobile housing units. Rural communities usually have no paved roads, central sewage system, regular transportation means, or recreational facilities. Wooden-frame houses are common which lack central heating systems, running water, or toilet facilities.

More elderly live alone in small rural areas than in urban areas, and 60 percent of rural elderly own their homes in which they have resided for most of their lives. Those who are home-bound are usually geographically isolated from group meal sites or are physically unable to shop for food to prepare meals. If meals were delivered to them, many could manage in spite of their frailties, disabilities, and handicaps. Home delivery of meals could combat malnutrition among the elderly, lessen their loneliness, and be an alternative to nursing homes or institutional existence. The Meals on Wheels program is not known to any great extent among the rural elderly.

Family farm homes are decreasing throughout rural America, and the independent farm owner plays a limited part in determining agricultural policy. Agribusiness controls approximately 9 percent of the total farm lands nationally. Many farm owners have become "landless" farmers. Big farms or corporations are considered "better farms," yet smaller farming operations are known to be more efficient.

Clean running water and sanitary sewer facilities are problems in daily living for New York rural areas. The National Water Demonstration Project has pointed out the fact that federal funds for such basic facilities are not available to countless families living in isolated rural areas.

Farmers Home Administration funds are not reaching many of the rural families with incomes of less than $5,000. A contributing factor to the plight of rural populations has been the scarcity of services and the lack of a committed advocacy to assess human needs and thereby shape national and state policies which could benefit rural communities.

Conclusions

The Conference on Rural New York focused on social problems that are unresolved in rural America. The issues and social questions posed should lead to a reexamination of policies which reaffirm federal and state commitment to rural areas. If an adequate standard of life for all Americans is guaranteed, social policy is fundamental in recognizing the needs, hopes, and aspirations of rural populations.

1. *Revitalization* is essential to reverse the trend of rural youth moving to urban and metropolitan areas. Innovative means have to be devised in rural communities to utilize the talents and potentials of young people to their fullest extent. In this respect, Education has a major responsibility to raise the literacy rate (1) by enabling school-age populations to learn, to reason abstractly, and to solve problems; and (2) by dispelling the idea that the longer rural minority children remain in school, the less they know and the harder it is for them to perform intelligently. Concerted attention must be given to the education of rural females in order to eradicate the notion that they are functional illiterates and have difficulty in reading job applications, want ads, food and medicine labels. Vocational training and placement opportunities must be made available to rural youth, minority groups, females, and older workers who can learn to serve effectively as foster grandparents, homemakers, and health aides.

2. *Health Care* is crucial in rural areas. Government programs fail to fill the gap even if private insurance coverage is available. Medicare, the major public funding source, discriminates against the rural elderly and disabled. Reimbursement allowances for health services are lower than in urban areas. Metropolitan health personnel can make more money for the same service which makes medical practice in the rural areas less attractive. Nutrition programs, mobile health units, and multiphasic screening must be expanded to ensure outreach and home care services to rural residents.

3. *Transportation* illustrates total "*benign* neglect" in its truest form in rural communities. The "invisible" rural poor of all ages and the aged residents in particular are victims of immobility and isolation. The absence of a public transit system forces reliance upon automobiles, which the poor cannot afford and the elderly are not licensed to operate. The Department of Transportation has assumed little responsibility for providing public transportation to rural communities although Congress provided funds to study public transportation needs nationally.

4. *Housing* for rural residents suggests that home repair programs are needed. New housing is a mandate for the poor, elderly, and disabled. Zoning codes in rural areas are restrictive and require reexamination to accommodate public housing and mobile units for rural populations.

Sanitary centralized water systems and sewer facilities are few and are not available to countless rural families living in isolated areas. Where adequate water supplies exist, rural people are forced to pay higher rates for water services than their urban counterparts. The use of rural land for parking lots and freeways and the disrespect for land by developers and speculators add to "despoiling" roads and rural resources. Such measures contribute to the depreciation of land and property value as well as detract from the rural communities where residents live.

5. *Human Services* deficiencies in rural areas should jolt providers out of a state of complacency. The lack of a delivery human service system reflects the neglect of rural human need assessment and personnel to deal with rural problems. It seems opportune to take advantage of rural "informal" systems and to encourage existing support systems to make services available to rural residents.

The Agricultural Cooperative Extension Model, whereby the agent functions as a middleman between the supplier of human services and the rural residents requiring services, seems appropriate. The agent can seldom function as a specialist, but more as a broker available for suggestions as to resources. Deliverers of services may be part of the existing informal system serving in volunteer capacities. They know how to reach the rural aging, the families of youth in trouble, and rural residents with financial problems. If guidance and training can be made available to them, they can become competent providers of human services as aides in homemaking, family planning, job finding, health, welfare, child care, and placement areas.

6. *Research* is imperative to update information and to plan dissemination in order to resolve current or anticipated problems in rural areas. The identification of needs, the solicitation of problem-solving strategies from local rural sources, planning and implementing them in addition to feedback as to relevancy are essential in improving the quality of life in the rural communities. It is crucial to broaden the base in working in rural areas. Concentration has been upon agricultural interests. Now, a new clientele group has to be served — the "invisible rural residents," namely the poor, the deinstitutionalized, the isolated aged, and neglected minorities.

7. *Rural Humanism* is timely, but requires modification of traditional roles, responsibilities, and the orientation of teaching, social work, nutrition, health, and lay practitioners. Syracuse University, with its vast educational resources, should have joint endeavors whereby various disciplines could learn more about the deplorable human conditions which characterize Upstate New York rural areas.

The Conference, the Workshops, in particular, went on record in charging the Human Service professionals as follows:

a. to update their skills in providing and delivering services to rural residents;

b. to expand their knowledge about rural populations in order to assist rural and regional planners in designing more adequate delivery systems and problem-solving strategies in rural communities;

c. to increase public understanding of the causes and implications of unsolved rural problems upon the State of New York;

d. to promote public information campaigns to convey the realities of life in rural New York and alert those who make decisions at all levels of government to rural needs;

e. to serve as an advocate to stimulate public interest in the changing rural conditions throughout Upstate New York State;

f. to develop the potentials inherent in rural women, especially those of ethnic and farming origins who know what it means to provide social supports and to offer cooperation as a part of human existence.

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